

strung both sides to a desperate exertion. The lord of that town was Tancred of Conversano, one of a family which could expect no mercy from the King. Rainulf from the Campania sent to his aid forty knights under Roger Plenco, and the insurgent cause seemed to hang upon the event. The King himself commanded the besiegers. After a long fight the barbican of the fortress was thrown down, and on the ground thus gained the siege engines were pushed up to the moat. The Saracens filled this with timber as a platform for the engines; Tancred had firebrands hurled down upon the timber; and the besiegers met this by turning water into the trench. At last the *belarius*, the pole furnished with an iron hook at its head, familiar in medieval war, tore down enough of the wall to form a breach through which, as also through the gates, the royalists forced a way into the town. Fire and sword made an end of the populace, the garrison, the houses, and the abbey. Roger Plenco suffered an ignoble death by hanging; the miserable Tancred was forced to pull the rope with his own hands and was fortunate enough to be merely banished from the kingdom. The siege and fate of Montepeloso show Roger's

energy  
and calculating cruelty at their full.

Meanwhile, Lothar had left Rome in  
the middle  
of June, leaving Innocent to the care of  
the Frangi-  
pani. On the 23d October, 1133, he was  
back at  
Mainz, and there heard the news that  
Innocent  
was once more a fugitive.